DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 054 222 TM 000 804

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TITLE Measurement of Levels of Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Program Planning and Budgeting Systems.
PUB DATE Dec 70
NOTE 6p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes, Ancillary Services, *Budgeting, *Educational Accountability, Elementary Schools, High Schools, Management Systems, *Program Planning, *Questionnaires, *School Personnel, Task Performance, Teacher Attitudes, Video Tape Recordings

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to ascertain the degree to which staff members in the Beverly Hills Unified School District were knowledgeable about the concept of accountability in public education and specifically Program Planning and Budgeting Systems (PPBS), and to obtain indicators pertaining to the climate for receptivity toward this concept. A video tape was shown simultaneously to all staff members, and a questionnaire was then administered which among other data revealed: 1) A low level of training and knowledge of Program Planning and Budgeting Systems; 2) A positive statistical relationship between staff members who felt negative about the concept of accountability and those who felt negative about their own job performance conditions, and the converse positive statistical relationship; 3) The value of video tape as an information tool; and 4) The overwhelming response for a desire to know more about PPBS and accountability. (Author/MS)

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Abstract: Measurement of Levels of

Program Planning and Budgeting Systems

Knowledge of
and Attitudes Toward

The problem was to ascertain the degree to which staff members in the Beverly Hills Unified School District were knowledgable about the concept of accountability in public education and specifically P.P.B.S., and to obtain indicators pertaining to the climate for receptivity toward this concept.

As a result of a video tape that was shown simultaneously to all staff members a questionnaire was then administered which among other data revealed:

1. A low level of training and knowledge of Program Planning and Budgeting Systems.

2. A positive statistical relationship between staff members who felt negatively about the concept of accountability and those who felt negatively about their own job performance conditions, and the converse positive statistical relationship.

3. The value of video tape as an information tool.

4. The overwhelming response for a desire to know more about PPBS and accountability.

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ANALYSIS OF DATA: P.P.B.S. VIDEOTAPE -- 11/23/70

The following data are responses from:

133 elementary teachers
61 high school teachers
9 administrators
4 school nurses
2 librarians
2 students
2 who did not identify themselves
1 counselor

In considering the implications of the data several pertinent conditions apply:

1) There was no significant difference among the elementary schools in the distribution of responses to the 16 items, nor between the elementary schools and the high school.

2) There were 215 certificated responses from approximately 360 certificated employees.

3) Approximately one-third of the questionnaires contained qualifying remarks and comments in addition to the structured responses.

4) Numerical information is approximate to the nearest zero.

5) Complete statistical information and questionnaire are attached.

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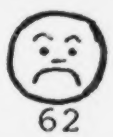
Question No. 1 indicates that there is an even spread among all groups in terms of attitude towards P.P.B.S., with approximately one-fourth indicating positive and one-fourth indicating negative response.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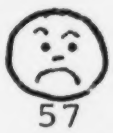
65

Question No. 2 shows a two-to-one positive response to this form of presentation (videotape).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101

Question No. 3 shows that over half of the respondents feel inadequate about their knowledge level of P.P.B.S.

In terms of attitude towards the concept of accountability, 60 per cent indicate some change as a result of the presentation, while 40 per cent indicate no change. This was in answer to Question No. 4.

Question No. 5 measures how the respondent feels that the concept of accountability would affect his professional responsibilities. 75 per cent indicate a slight to complete change, while 25 per cent said it would bring no change at all.

In response to Question No. 6, 15 per cent felt that the concept of accountability in education is unnecessary, 70 per cent felt that it was useful to vital, while the other 15 per cent wrote comments generally expressing reservations.

Question No. 7, which would relate to the next step in the implementation plan, shows that approximately half of the staff feels they wish to know more, and approximately 40 per cent wishes to know much more. They rest indicate they feel no need to know more.

The second part of the questionnaire, items 1 - 9, asks the kinds of questions that a Program Planning and Budget System would attempt to deal with and solve, particularly in the areas of staff communication, decision-making powers, perceived needs of the learner, and job performance. The purpose here is to measure staff acceptance of the idea of accountability and P.P.B.S. (on the first part of the questionnaire) against attitudes and feelings of staff members about their own job performance under the present conventional budgeting system.

Question No. 1 asks if more money will solve the respondent's problems in his area of responsibility. 20 per cent indicate "yes" while 50 per cent said "no". The 30 per cent remaining could be interpreted as a qualified response, as "perhaps, sometimes, or under certain conditions".

Question No. 2 asked if the respondent has access to information in order to make decisions. 30 per cent said "no", 45 per cent said "yes".

Question No. 3 shows a preponderance of staff members (80 per cent) who are in agreement with their immediate superiors as to what their professional responsibilities are, with less than one per cent indicating disagreement.

In response to Question No. 4, 25 per cent of staff members feel they are not involved in decisions that affect them directly, while 55 per cent feel that they are.

Question No. 5 indicates that there is an even distribution showing that one-third feel that resources are not allocated in terms of the learner, one-third feel that they are, and the other group is somewhere in between those two positions.

The most definitive response occurs in Question No. 6 where 92 per cent of staff members feel that they are performing to the level of their capabilities. This response should be considered critically in terms of the eight other responses in this section.

Question No. 7 asks whether there are conditions about job performance over which the staff member has no control. 25 per cent responded "no", and 70 per cent responded "yes".

According to the response to Question No. 8, 80 per cent of staff members feel there is good communication between themselves and their colleagues, while 15 per cent feel there is not.

And finally, in response to Question No. 9, 60 per cent indicate that support services in the district meet their professional needs, while 15 per cent responded in the negative.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE INDICATORS

Strong negative and positive responses were culled out in an attempt to get indicators that could possibly show if a correlation exists between those who express strong positive and/or negative attitudes towards P.P.B.S., and those who expressed those same strong attitudes toward their professional responsibilities and conditions under which they are performed.

The indicator questions on the first page were the following:

Negative

Question No. 1 -- responded 1, 2, or 3
Question No. 6 -- responded "unnecessary"

Positive

Question No. 1 -- responded 4 or 5
Question No. 6 -- responded "vital"

Negative -- 25 per cent
Positive -- 35 per cent
Uncommitted -- 40 per cent

With these as indicators, an attempt at arriving at some correlation (if one exists) between strong positive and strong negative attitudes toward accountability and P.P.B.S. and similar feelings toward on-the-job performance with a numerical difference of more than nine considered indicative. Results showed a significant difference in the following areas:

Question No. 1 -- "More money is needed."
Negative to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 14
Positive to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 27

Question No. 4 -- "I am involved in decisions."
Negative to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 16
Positive to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 27

Question No. 6 -- "I perform well."
Negative to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 15
Positive to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 29

Question No. 8 -- "I communicate well with colleagues."
Negative to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 11
Positive to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 30

Question No. 9 -- "I get good support services"
Negative to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 13
Positive to P.P.B.S. -- yes - 27

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE INDICATORS - CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions to be drawn from this evidence is that those staff members who feel most positively toward their jobs and their ability to perform in them, also have positive and receptive attitudes toward the concept of accountability. Conversely, the 25 per cent who expressed negative attitudes toward accountability and P.P.B.S. also have negative feelings toward their own job performance and the conditions under which they work.

In terms of further implementation of P.P.B.S., this 25 per cent would have to be considered the target population to try to determine internal and external causative factors and attempt to deal with them.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Use of the Media - The conclusive positive response to the effectiveness of the Information Retrieval System points to its further use for the purpose of giving information and providing a climate for change.

Attitudes Toward Accountability - While there is an ambivalence expressed toward P.P.B.S., 3/4 of the respondents feel that accountability is needed and further, that it would affect them. 90 per cent want to know more, so that the climate should be considered generally favorable for further in-service training.

Attitudes About Job Performance - Contrary to popularly expressed opinion, more money is not the solution to problem areas for most staff members. Rather they express the need for a better information system to help them serve students, and greater participation in decision-making processes including the areas of expenditures in terms of student needs and conditions affecting their job performance.

Attitudes Toward Support Services - Staff members feel very positively that support services meet their needs. For the 15 per cent who replied in the negative, perhaps the further definition of purpose that a Program Description, Goals, and Objectives (as required by P.P.B.S.), would be of help so that staff would know what is available and what they can expect to meet needs that they have.

Job Performance - Certainly, professional pride is a large factor in the 92 per cent positive response to the question of how well one does one's job. However, if the factors limiting job performance, (as expressed in the data) were reduced, job performance could be expected to improve by mutually-agreed-upon, measurable criteria.